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SUBJECT: POLAND: GOVERNMENT STEPS UP EFFORTS VS. FORCED  
LABOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

REF: WARSAW 1570

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY. In the months since stories broke of Poles trafficked to Spain and Italy for forced labor (Reftel) the Polish government has stepped up efforts in the fight against human trafficking. The Polish National Police (PNP) has supplemented the five person Central Anti-Trafficking Unit (CATU), established in July, by creating seventeen regional teams which are cooperating on a new "Hit the Route" strategy as well as increasing nationwide training of police on TIP issues. More arrests have been made in the Italian labor camp case, although the lack of a signed bilateral agreement could be problematic for the prosecution. In October a similar camp, at which trafficked Polish citizens were held against their will, was shut down in Spain. There are ongoing investigations of trafficking networks from Poland to the United Kingdom and Sweden. The lack of a definition of human trafficking in Poland's legal code has made prosecution of trafficking for forced labor difficult, but the Krakow prosecutor's decision to use the 2000 Palermo Protocol definition created a useful precedent. END SUMMARY.

BOLSTERING ANTI-TRAFFICKING FORCES AND NEW STRATEGY  
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12. (SBU) In a November 16 meeting with Poloff, Pawel Maslowski, head of the CATU, reviewed the Polish government's stepped up efforts in recent months in the fight against human trafficking in general, and in prosecuting those responsible for trafficking Poles to forced labor camps in Spain and Italy, in particular. In July the PNP established the five-person CATU, based in Warsaw and headed by Maslowski. The unit functions within the PNP's Criminal Bureau and is supported by six individuals from other departments: two detectives each from the Criminal Intelligence Office, Prevention Office, and Central Bureau of Investigations, who are assigned to work on trafficking cases as needed. In addition, over the last few months, the GOP has allocated further resources to the anti-trafficking fight by creating seventeen new teams of two or three people each to combat human trafficking and child pornography. There is one team in each of Poland's sixteen provinces and a local unit in the Warsaw city police. The CATU tasks the new regional teams on a case-by-case basis.

13. (SBU) Poland is on the crossroads of two major international trafficking routes: the south-to-north Balkan route (from Turkey through Poland to Scandinavia) and the

east-to-west Russian route (from Russia and Moldova through Poland to Western Europe as far as Portugal). Traffickers have traditionally utilized these routes for sex workers, although authorities have noticed a sharp increase in trafficking for forced labor. The PNP recently adopted a new approach called "Hit the Route." Until recently police reacted to individually reported cases or incidents of trafficking, but under this new approach they are attempting to coordinate their efforts and fight the entire trafficking chain. Depending on the information in a case, the CATU assigns it to a regional unit and this unit then works in cooperation with others along the entire route. Maslowski also noted that the CATU would like to begin investigating trafficking in human organs and sex tourism involving minors.

14. (SBU) To further improve enforcement, the CATU has been training police officers throughout the country on how to identify victims of trafficking. This training includes a standard list of questions for officers to ask, along with exercises, instructions, and films that show officers how to recognize victims. Activists such as La Strada's Stana Buchowska note that Police treatment of victims, which has long been a weakness, has improved somewhat.

#### PROGRESS ON ITALIAN LABOR CAMP CASE

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15. (SBU) Maslowski also discussed progress on the case of Poles trafficked to Italy and used for forced agricultural labor. He stated that the "mirror investigations" conducted by Polish and Italian police were effective for the investigation and takedown phases, but the lack of a signed agreement for joint prosecution is a problem for moving forward. Polish prosecutors believe they have found some legal justification for joint prosecution based on Article 19 of the European Convention for Organized Crime, and Justice Minister Ziobro is planning a visit to Italy to propose an

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agreement. If signed, the joint investigative team could be up and running within a month, with the case going to court by summer 2007.

16. (SBU) So far 31 people have been arrested and charged with human trafficking in the case. The most recent arrest took place on November 16, when the PNP apprehended the alleged leader of the criminal group that recruited Poles to work at the forced labor camps, and his wife, who each face possible maximum sentences of 10 years, and an associate, who faces a five year sentence. Others arrested include 18 Poles who were responsible for recruitment and transport, along with Ukrainians and Algerians who served as camp guards. The Italian owner of the farm, who claims he was unaware of the brutal conditions of the camp, remains free. The CATU has confirmed the identities of 113 of the over 300 victims liberated from the forced labor camps, almost all of whom have chosen to remain in Italy to look for another job. The PNP is also gathering material evidence for murder charges in the case. No bodies have been found so far, but police estimate at least 10 people have been killed since July 2005.

#### CAMPS FOUND IN VALENCIAN ORANGE GROVES

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17. (SBU) In a separate case, on October 30, Spanish police, in cooperation with the CATU, arrested two Poles and four Armenians in Spain, and another two Armenians in Poland who were organizing forced labor camps at orange groves in the Valencia region of Spain. The estimated 30 Poles imprisoned in the camps worked for no pay, lived in crude barracks, and resorted to eating grass for sustenance. Information about the camps came to light after workers sent text messages to police. The CATU tasked the regional team in Lodz with investigating this case because a majority of the 20 identified victims come from that region. Only eight of

these victims have agreed to testify against their captors.

18. (SBU) According to Maslowski, the victims were recruited for the camps in Poland via word of mouth by friends and colleagues, with no advertisements in the press. Upon arrival in Spain, the victims were put into indentured servitude, forced to repay their "debts" for job placement and transportation. The perpetrators also beat, threatened, and utilized psychological torture on their victims. Maslowski praised the responsiveness of the Spanish authorities. Working only from the text messages the victims placed to Polish police, Spanish police identified the camp location and liberated the victims. Maslowski hinted that the CATU is now tracking labor trafficking operations from Poland to the United Kingdom and Sweden.

#### NEW LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS

19. (SBU) Poland has signed and ratified the 2000 Palermo Protocol, which broadly defines trafficking in persons to include recruitment, transportation, transfer of persons by means of any form of coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labor, or servitude. However, the Polish legal code does not actually define human trafficking, leaving a gray area for prosecutors and judges, who often saw forced prostitution as the only form of trafficking. Until the July arrests in Italy, the concept of trafficking for purposes other than sex work was not on prosecutors' nor the public's radar. The press has actively followed this case, and the decision by the Krakow prosecutor to use the Palermo Protocol definition for cases beyond sexual trafficking has created a precedent for forced labor trafficking. This is now the de facto, if not the de jure, definition of human trafficking used by Polish prosecutors. (Note: Maslowski and NGOs are cautiously optimistic about this development, and hope that it will give more teeth to the prosecution of forced labor traffickers. End Note).

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